LIBRARY

CREWKERNE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of

THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year ended 31st December, 1950

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER:-

Medical Officer of Health

Dr. A.M. McCall,

M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND COUNCILLORS OF THE CREWKERNE URBAN DISTRICT

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Report for the Year 1950.

The Public with their preoccupation with Specialist and Ancillary Services of the National Health Act, are apt to overlook what they owe to the Preventitive Health Services, which have been responsible for saving so much Human Life and Suffering in the last half Century.

The greatest progress is marked by the absence of Cases and Deaths from Disease. This has little popular appeal or Press value, and the achievements go unnoticed.

However, if this Report is read with these facts in mind, the steady progress made during the Year will be apparent.

I think that it is fair to say, that the Public Health Department has during the past Year, handled a greater volume of work than in any previous Year.

Mr. Cottrell quickly settled down on his arrival in Crewkerne, and has been most diligent and helpful throughout the Year, and is directly responsible for much of the progress made.

I am,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

A T Cell

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

SECTION A

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area

Population

The Registrar General gives the estimated population of Crewkerne for the Mid-Year 1950, as 4175.

Birth Rate

The Birth Rate in Crewkerne was 15.0 per 1000, and is slightly less than the average for England and Wales, which was 15.8. It shows a decline from the 1949 figure.

Death Rate

The chief causes of Death are shown in Appendix A, Table 2.

Heart Disease again has claimed more victims than any other Disease, and together with Diseases of Circulation, totals more than 1/3rd. of all Deaths. There were fewer Deaths from Cancer. The Diseases listed as ill-defined, include such terms as Senility, to which no precise cause of Death can be given.

Infant Mortality

There were two cases of Infants dying within one month of Birth, and two Still Births.

Maternal Mortality

There was one case of Maternal Mortality. The child has progressed well, despite early difficulties.

Social Services

The formation of an Old Folks Club filled a need in the Town, and has been very successful in providing facilities for the Old Persons of the Town.

SECTION B

General Provision of Health Services of the Area

The administration of the Local Services worked smoothly throughout the Year, due largely to delegation of authority by the County Medical Officer of Health.

Frequent conferences were held, and local difficulties were discussed and overcome rapidly.

Infant Welfare Clinics

Clinics were held every 2nd. and 4th. Tuesday at the Methodist Hall, South Street, Crewkerne. During 1950 1,309 children attended. This is a further increase on last Year and represents the greatest number of attendances in any year so far. The children were regularly weighed and Nurses attended to advise parents. There were 141 Consultations with the Doctor. Close co-operation between the Clinic

and the General Practitioners in the Town continues with undeniable advantage to the Public.

My thanks are due to Mrs. Smith, the Secretary, for the organisation and smooth running of the Clinic.

Immunisation

This was carried out at the Welfare Clinic, and 51 children were immunised during the Year. This is slightly fewer than in 1949 but when it is remembered that for 5 months of the Year, all immunisation was suspended owing to the presence of Infantile Paralysis in the District, the number is very satisfactory.

Vaccination

As promised in my last Journal, I have made a special effort to stimulate interest in this important aspect of Preventitive Medicine. The response was encouraging. The total number of persons vaccinated or re-vaccinated in Crewkerne was 67, of whom 42 were done at the Clinic.

Health Visiting

The District Nurse carried out Health Visiting in Crewkerne, and was responsible for the improved attendances at Clinics. A special Health Visitor has been looking after all Tuberculous Patients in the Area.

Maternity Services

At present, this work is carried out by the District Nurse, and when needed the Private Practitioners are consulted. There are Maternity Beds available at Crewkerne Hospital for necessitous cases.

There were 28 Home Deliveries during the Year, and 82 were admitted to Hospital.

Home Help Service

The County Home Help Service, so valuable in times of Confinement, Illness or Old Age is well established in this Area, and has worked smoothly when required.

School Medical Service

This Service is organised by the County Education Committee. During the Year, I have visited every School in Crewkerne twice, and at these inspections, 525 children have been examined, and 137 immunised. These figures show a considerable increase on last Year. Details are given in Appendix B, Table 1.

Dental Service

Somerset, like all other Health Authorities, has been finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their Dental Services, owing to Staff resignations, since 1948. Crewkerne has been particularly unfortunate, and only emergency treatment was available for the children here.

In view of the above, I was pleased to be able to support the application of a Private Dental Practitioner to commence Practice in the Town, and already the Public are benefitting from his presence.

Ophthalmic Services

There has been an improvement in supply of spectacles during the Year, and our Local Optician has been most helpful in securing priority for urgent cases.

Ambulance Service

The Ambulance was used on 154 occasions, including 15 Maternity Cases, covering a mileage of 2,970. Mr. Sutton continues to organise and drive the Ambulance, and is largely responsible for such a satisfactory year's work.

National Assistance Act

In no case was it found necessary to apply to the Court for an Order of Removal for a person "in need of care and attention". One patient was moved to Hospital, following investigation by the Health Department.

SECTION C

Prevalence of, and control over Infectious Diseases and Other Diseases

A Summary of the noticications will be found in Appendix C, Table 1.

There was a mild Measles Epidemic during the Year, otherwise the incidence of Infectious Diseases was about average.

There was no case of Infantile Paralysis, despite several cases occurringin surrounding districts. The outbreak in England in 1950 was widespread, more cases occurring then ever before, and Crewkerne was fortunate to escape.

The National Campaign against Food-borne Disease was supported by Local Propaganda and a special Film. Unfortunately, this was badly supported by the Public and few of the Food-handlers in the Town attended the showing of what is an excellent film. Model Byelaws, dealing with the Handling, Wrapping and Sale of Food, were adopted by the Council during the Year. It is not the intention of the Health Department to use these, except as a last resort. It is hoped that by friendly co-operation, and frequent visiting, it will be possible to raise the standard of all establishments selling food, so that we will have no outbreaks of Disease. One outbreak occurred during 1950, involving 13 persons. The probable source of infection was traced.

B.C.G. Immunisation for Tuberculosis

Arrangements were completed during the Year, whereby it is now possible for particular categories, who are exposed to infection by Tuberculosis, to be goven B.C.G. Immunisation. These categories include Tuberculosis negative Nurses and Medical Students, also Tuberculosis negative contacts.

SECTION D

Environmental Health Services

(a) Sanitary Circumstances

Climatic Conditions

The Year was extremely wet and towards the end some flooding

occurred.

Water Supply

Despite the heavy rains, some shortage was experienced in the Autumn and minor restrictions had to be imposed.

Monthly Analyses were carried out and a Summary is shown in Appendix D. Table 1. The majority were satisfactory.

Drainage and Sewerage

Realising the inadequacy of the antiquated Sewage Disposal System at the South end of the Town, energetic steps have been taken by the Surveyor to construct a pumping system, whereby a considerable amount of sewerage can be diverted to the modern Works at the Northern Outfall. Ministry approval is now being sought.

Public Cleansing and Refuse Collection

Weekly removal of Refuse was carried out in the Town. The roads were kept in an excellent state of cleanliness and are a credit to the Town, despite occasional lapses by the people at the Bus Stops.

Paper Collection, which we were forced to discontinue, has been re-commenced, and it is hoped will be supported by the Public.

Rats and Mice Destruction

Routine treatments were carried out at the Council properties, and at private buildings, on request. In addition, the survey of the Town, and Test Baiting of Sewers was continued.

However, the new Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949, which came into force on 31st March, 1950, demands a great deal of a Local Authority, and it is possible that the Council will be forced to increase the amount of time spent on this work.

Swimming Bath

Owing to the serious defects in the Viney Bridge Bath, it was reluctantly decided not to attempt the repair, and steps were taken to dispose of it.

The Bath at the Grammar School was satisfactory.

Factories Act

The Statistics will be found in Appendix D. Table 2.

(b) Housing

Statistics

The new Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector had a great deal of accumulated work to do. However, he has tackled the arrears of work in a most energetic manner, and as a result, considerable headway has been made. Appendix D. Table 3, shows the work done in the Year.

Post War Housing

The number of houses completed during the Year was 6, making a total of 82 since the War, plus 8 erected privately.

Our allocation of houses being so small, we were able to get ahead of schedule and commenced those allocated for 1951. It is hoped that in this way a supplementary allocation will be granted.

The allocation of a small number of houses presents the Council with a considerable difficulty. There are no more small sites left, where say 4 houses can be erected. Erecting one or two houses on a site is more expensive. Again, the development of a large site for the few houses we are given, is also considered an unjustifiable expense to the Ratepayers at this time of the rising cost of living. Sooner or later, a large site will have to be acquired, large enough to be able to hold all the houses allocated to us within the next few years. A reasonable allocation by the Ministry of some twenty houses would be an encouragement to the Council to develop such a Site immediately, rather than as at present, trying to fit houses into small sites where there is only limited space.

(c) Inspection and Supervision of Food

Milk Supply

All the retailers were registered and licences granted. Sampling was not done.

Food

Meat Inspection was carried out regularly. Details will be found in Appendix D. Table 4.

It will be noted that 26,264 animals were slaughtered during the Year. These have to be inspected by the Sanitary Inspector, and the duty is a heavy burden upon him. Only a very small proportion of the Meat is consumed locally, and the majority is sent to London and other Centres.

Special attention was paid to the transport of Meat and following an investigation, the co-operation of the Local Contractors was enlisted, and I am satisfied that everything is being done by them to ensure that no Meat is damaged or contaminated during transit in Crewkerne.

Ice Cream

Ice Cream Sampling was done regularly, and the results show a progressive improvement in grading over the Year. We are still concerned at the sale of Ice Cream by certain Mobile Stalls, which come and go without our being able to ascertain the source of manufacture.

However, your Officers have the matter in hand, and hope to be able to discover where they originate from, and then be in a position to Sample these Vendors' Products.

Details are shown in Appendix D. Table 5.

APPENDIX A TABLE 1

CREWKERNE 1950

BIRTH RATE		M	F
Live Births	Total	32	31
	Legitimate	32	31
	Illegitimate	Nil	Nil
Still Births	Total	1	1
	Legitimate	1	1
	Illegitimate	Nil	Nil
Death of Infants under 1 Year	Total	1	1
	Legitimate	1	1
	Illegitimate	Nil	Nil

Birth Rate 15.0 per 1000

APPENDIX A TABLE 2

CREWKERNE 1950

TABLE OF DEATHS	Total	M	F
	57	23	34

Death Rate 13.7 per 1000

Causes of Death	Total	M	F
Heart Disease	15	6	9
Other Diseases of the Circulatory System	6	2	4
Cancer (all forms)	6	5	1
Respiratory Diseases	4	2	2
Syphilitic Disease	1	1	
Suicide	1		1
Child Birth	1		1
Other Diseases (Ill-defined)	23	7	16

APPENDIX B TABLE 1

SCHOOLS

Name of School	No. of Children examined	No. Immunised
Crewkerne Infants	47	46
" "	54	Nil
Crewkerne Junior Girls	35	8
" " "	33	Nil
Crewkerne Junior Boys	39	9
" " "	26	Nil
Crewkerne Secondary Modern	97	42
" " "	95	Nil
Crewkerne Grammar School	44	32
" " "	55	Nil
TOTAL	525	137 Booster

APPENDIX C TABLE 1

Infectious Diseases

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	13
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	10
Measles	...	...	...	98
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	...	...	1
Chicken Pox	...	...	...	2
Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	Nil
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	4
			TOTAL	128

Analysis of cases notified

	Age Groups									
	-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45
Scarlet Fever				2	2	8	1			
Measles	1	6	6	21	10	51	3			
Whooping Cough		1	6			6				
Chicken Pox							1		1	
Puerperal Pyrexia									1	

No cases notified in age groups 45-65 and 65 plus.

Tuberculosis

Age Group	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
- 1								
1 - 5								
5 - 15								
15 - 25								
25 - 35	1				1			
35 - 45	2	1						
45 - 55								
55 - 65								
65 +								
TOTAL	3	1	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil

APPENDIX D TABLE 1

RAW WATER				TREATED AFTER GOING INTO SUPPLY			
BACTERIOLOGICAL		CHEMICAL		BACTERIOLOGICAL		CHEMICAL	
Satis-factory	Unsatis-factory	Satis-factory	Unsatis-factory	Satis-factory	Unsatis-factory	Satis-factory	Unsatis-factory
9	4	2	-	5	-	-	-

APPENDIX D TABLE 2

Factories Act 1937

Inspections for the purpose of provisions as to Health (including Inspections made by the Sanitary Inspector)

Premises	Number on Register	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6, are to be enforced by Local Authorities	51	14	1	-
Cases in which defects were found		Nil		

Outwork

No. of Outworkers in August List required by Section 110. 144 (making Wearing Apparel).

APPENDIX D TABLE 3

Housing

	Houses erected during the Year		Houses in course of erection		Conversion to Flats or Dwellings		Temporary such as Army Huts, etc.
	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	
Local Authority	6		28		4		
Private Enterprise	1		1				
TOTALS	7		29		4		